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## Prefatory Note

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# Prefatory Note

Employed full time in their separate professional education fields of dental hygiene, respiratory therapy, and residence hall coordination, the writers of the essays in this issue of *Draftings* participated with me in an advanced seminar in the history and philosophy of higher education during the fall semester of 1986. We came together weekly for reflection and what one might call socratic therapeutic dialogue. The fact that the year 1986 marked the 350th anniversary of the founding of Harvard College provided a springboard for the seminar, since the history of higher education in the United States began with the founding of Harvard in 1636.

Starting in 1636 with this church-related model, the history of colleges and universities in America included the development of the normal schools, the universities patterned on the English-German model, the land-grant universities, the public universities on the pattern of the Wisconsin Idea of 1903, the community junior colleges, and the multiversity of the 1960s. And it is from this crucible—from their studies of the liberal arts and vocational schools in the history of higher education in America and their judgment of professional practices—that these writers have produced their essays clustered around three aspects of higher education: the intellectual, vocational, and spiritual.

Moreover the present essays are also informed by the widespread opinion that we are a "nation at risk" educationally as well as in the way of applied science, for 1986 was the year when spacecraft Challenger blew up in our faces with seven people on board. A teacher died after take-off on that trip, as well as the professional astronauts and interplanetary scientists. Finally, while the writers here have not been directly affected by the student demonstrations in China, Russia, and France this year, by revolutions on the make in South Africa and in the Phillipines, and by hostages and wars in the Middle East, they have borne them in mind during their involvement in their individual professions and studies in the heart of middle America either at the Hawkeye Institute of Technology in Waterloo or at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, both in Iowa.

For each of them, and for me as their facilitator, a bond of hope has emerged from the explorations during this semester and out of the experience of becoming a "writing community" during these few weeks. There is a harmony and ferment of these inquiring minds and of the charitable hearts from which they have written the following pieces for this volume.

Finally to the editor, Professor Barbara Lounsberry, who coached the writing regularly, coming down with the dictum of "true, new and important," we salute you, for now, with the traditional benediction Ave

*atque vale* in a system of higher education and in a nation at risk.

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